

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

MAY 6, 1858.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. YULEE submitted the following

REPORT.

*The Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads, to whom was referred the memorial of John Frink, praying the remission of certain fines and deductions made from his compensation for carrying the mails under a contract with the Post Office Department, beg leave to report :*

The memorialist alleges that he entered into contract with the Post Office Department to transport the mails on various mail-routes in the States of Missouri, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Michigan, and performed the service from July 1, 1850, to June 30, 1854; that, by an act of Congress passed subsequent to entering into said contracts, a large reduction was made in the rates of postage, the effect of which was to increase, to a large extent, the size and weight of the mails, all of which were carried without any extra compensation therefor, but, on the contrary, large and excessive fines were imposed, and deductions made for failures to arrive in schedule time, when such failures occurred in consequence of bad roads, rendering it impossible to make time with the large increase in the weight of the mails, which would average more than double, and frequently more than five times, its weight prior to the change of the law; and the memorialist therefore prays that the Postmaster General be authorized and required to review the cases, remit the said fines and deductions, and settle the account in a just and equitable manner.

It appears from the statement of the Postmaster General, in his letter hereto annexed, that the memorialist was the contractor on ninety-three different mail-routes in the above mentioned States, at an aggregate annual compensation of \$116,087, amounting in the contract term to \$464,348, and that the fines and deductions during the same period amounted to only \$9,742, or a yearly average of \$2,435 50. This amount does not seem to the committee to be, as the memorialist alleges, "excessive," considering the magnitude of the service and the compensation allowed; and as the committee do not deem it wise to interfere lightly with the discretion vested in the Postmaster General in the matter of fines and deductions, they recommend the adoption of the following resolution:

*Resolved,* That the prayer of the memorialist ought not to be granted.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT,  
*April 7, 1858.*

SIR: In answer to your communication of the 2d instant, enclosing the memorial of John Frink, and asking for such information as "may be material to the action of the committee," I have the honor to inform you that the memorialist was contractor on ninety-three different mail routes in Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Missouri, from July 1, 1850, to June 30, 1854, at an aggregate annual compensation of \$116,087, amounting in the contract term to \$464,348, and that the fines and deductions during the same period, for failures to comply with contract stipulations, amount to \$9,742. Those fines, ranging from twenty-five cents to fifty dollars, were imposed, according to the regulations of this department, on evidence furnished by postmasters and other agents of the government, showing delinquencies on the part of the contractor in the transportation of the mails, for which delinquencies no explanations satisfactory to the Postmaster General had been offered. The papers, showing the specific reasons for the action of the department in each particular case, are very voluminous, and the labor of copying them would employ the entire clerical force of the department for several days.

It is hoped that the information above communicated will be sufficient for the purposes of the committee.

Agreeably to your request, the memorial of Mr. Frink is herewith returned.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

AARON V. BROWN,  
*Postmaster General.*

Hon. D. L. YULEE,

*Chairman Committee on Post Offices, &c., U. S. Senate.*